

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

North Carolina is a diverse land with natural beauty that appeals to residents and visitors alike.

It is also a land experiencing competition for its natural resources that are already under stress and that could be lost to us in the absence of a widespread awareness of their existence, their significance and their value.

Natural resources are not isolated from each other or from the people who use them. Each resource is an integral part of the ecosystem. When one part of the system is affected, other parts feel the impact. It is environmental education that provides the knowledge, understanding and awareness of this interconnectedness of all things and gives us the ability to make more informed environmental decisions.

The more we understand and respect our own community, the more capable we are of being good stewards of the environment. If you have ever visited one of North Carolina's many Environmental Education Centers—nature centers, parks, aquariums, museums, the zoo, public gardens, etc.—then you have already begun appreciating natural systems and had fun while learning about them.

Environmental education is not issue advocacy or a biased point of view. Environmental education enables communities to care for their own environment. Living within the limits set by the environment depends on the beliefs and commitment of individuals. Individuals working together as a community have more power to promote practices that can nourish rather than cripple their natural life-support systems.

This publication explores one element of your ecological address—your river basin—and links you to educational resources about all 17 river basins in the state.